

# Newsletter for Birdwatchers

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Birds Around Chilka Lake by K.S.R. Krishna Raju and M.R. Appa Row

We spent a couple of days recently at Chilka Lake in Orissa. The trip was very rewarding - for we identified about 57 species of birds and tasted, for the first time, the wonderful Crab meat (*Scylla serratus*) made for us specially by the Khansama at Barkul travellers bungalow-with an hours notice.

On 24th February, 79, we woke up to find about 150 Brahminy Ducks huddled together in loose parties of fives and tens, in the shallow waterfront opposite the Guest house at Rambha. These large ducks spent almost the entire day till about 5.30 p.m., either preening or leisurely probing the shallows.

Taking a ride in the Tourist department's motor launch was a real pleasure. In 2 hours time we covered about 10 k.m., meeting many birds. After passing through the danger rock signal and turning slightly right we approached 'Bird Island', a small hillock in water with scanty vegetation, a few tall trees and abundant 'snakes' - we were told (Rom Whitaker please note - for you may get some thing extraordinary from this hillock which is cut off from the land for the last many decades or centuries).

We sighted about 50 Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) and a dozen Rosy Pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotus*). The Grey Herons are with pink and brown coloured bills and feet - and we later understood that the differences are due to their ages - for the breeding birds will have bright orange bill and legs while the non breeding young ones will have dark brownish instead. On the rocky boulders and the few bushes we saw a mixed variety of birds congregated and the most notable among them were Openbill Storks, Spoonbills, Night Herons, Darters, Cormorants. A lone *Phalacrocorax carbo* with glistening white gular patch was very interesting to see. The Rosy Pelicans were seen resting on a large boulder and offered us a very clear view from close quarters - and rather foolishly we clicked our cameras without realising the absence of telephoto lens in that excitement. There are some trees on top of the hillock, full of nests, ownership not known, since we noted 3/4 species of birds sitting together on the trees. But we have an inkling that these nests may belong to Grey Herons (Don't ask us why).

We estimated about 2,000 duck in that small creek and must have seen another 3-4000 during the trip to the Island. However, about 75% of them were Tufted Ducks, White-eyed Pochards, Common Pochards, and Shoveller, but not a single Pintail or Teal. Rather surprising! Probably they are dispersed and scattered in that great lake, or the birds must have gone further down south on migration. There seems to be a tendency among these birds to flock and move about species wise - or say congeneric species show more gregariousness - as far as ducks are concerned at Chilka. (I spent too little time

here to speak about this with authority - and my remark may not have any sound basis!)

That evening we went to Barkul to fix up our next days programme and on our way we had a rare opportunity of seeing the seemingly rare White-tailed Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*).

Next morning we went to Barkul tourist bungalow near the Barkul point, further up from Ramgha. It is wonderful place for birdwatching and meditation. We estimated about 20-25,000 duck in front of the bungalow (The bungalow is right on the edge of water) and again 80% of the birds were either Pochards or Shovellers. With great difficulty we were able to locate a lone Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and a few Teals (*Anas querquedula*). However we recorded a couple of other waders like Snipe (*Limnodramus semipalmatus*), Greenshank, Redshank, Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), a lone Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) in semi breeding plumage and a couple of Whimbrels. Earlier in the morning we observed hundreds of Cormorants drying themselves, standing on the fish traps (Bamboo cages), stored at the edge of the water. Two Whitebellied Sea Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) flew overhead, causing much panic and confusion among the duck and waders, and settled on the same bamboo cages for a few minutes and soared off again.

On the way to Barkul we visited Narayani temple, where we saw a solitary Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*), three pairs of Blackheaded Orioles in excellent breeding plumage, besides a few other birds. (A complete list of birds observed during the two days is appended).

A few words about Chilka lake may not be out of place here. The lake has a water spread of about 1,000 sq.km, and is connected with the Bay of Bengal by a long outer channel through a single mouth. About 150 odd species of Fish and 29 odd species of prawns have been recorded from the lake and the annual average fish catches are estimated to be around 3500 MT, of which Prawns, Mulletts and Cat-fishes constitute together about 60% of the total catch. However, during the last few years there seem to be a definite and alarming deterioration in the eco-system of the lake. The salinity is said to be going down at an alarming rate and the lake is getting silted up. For all practical purposes the tidal interchange is negligible, if not absent. All this leads to ultimate change of Chilka eco-system and effect the fishery as well as other natural faunistic resources, unless urgent safe guards are taken. From the bird protection point of view the poaching is minimal - as compared to the last few years.



There is also a great potentiality to develop culture of Prawns, Crabs and sea weeds, as well as Milkfish and Catfish. We wonder why the concerned agencies are not active on these lines. Do they allow private enterprenuers to take up Mariculture? By encouraging private parties and taking up conservation measures like widening the mouth of the lake and dredging the silt out, Chilka lake will be a boon to our protein hungry nation.

List of birds identified at Chilka Lake (24/26.2.79)

*Pelecanus onocrotus*, *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *P. fuscicollis*, *P. niger*, *Anhinga rufa*, *Ardea cinerea*, *Bubulcus ibis*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Anastomus oscitans*, *Platelea leucorodia*, *Tadorna ferruginea*, *Anas penelope*, *A. quesrquedula*, *A. clypeata*, *Aythya ferina*, *A. nyroca*, *A. fuligula*, *Haliaeetus indus*, *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, *H. albicilla*, *Gyps bengalensis*, *Metapodius indicus*, *Pluvialis squatarola*, *P. apricaria*, *Charadrius alexandrinus*, *Ch. mongolus*, *Numenius phaeopus*, *Limosa* sps?, *Tringa totanus*, *T. stangnatilis*, *T. nebularia*, *T. glareola*, *T. hypoleucos*, *Limnodramus semipalmatus*, *Calidris minutus*, *C. testaceus*, *Larus* sps?, *Streptopelia chinensis*, *Eudynamys scolopacea*, *Alcedo atthis*, *Halcyon smyrnensis*, *Merops orientalis*, *Coracias bengalensis*, *Megalaime zeylanica*, *Lanius vittatus*, *Oriolus xanthornus*, *Dicrurus adsimilis*, *Sturnus contra*, *Acridotheres tristis*, *Corvus splendens*, *Tephrodornis pondiceranus*, *Pycnonotus melanicterus*, *P. jocosus*, *P. leugogenys*, *Monticola solitarius*, *Passer domesticus*.

Notable absentees: *Anas crecca*, *A. acuta*, *Arenaria interpres*, *Sarkidiornis*, *Nettapus*.

Further Notes from my Bird Diary by V. Santharam

Crows feeding young Koel: On the 1st of November, I had been to my uncle's house. At about 4.00 p.m. I heard peculiar calls which reminded me of the harsh calls of the drongo, but were very loud and frequent. I rushed to the garden from where the sound was being produced and tried to locate the producer of the call. High on a branch of the mango tree was perched a koel fledgling (*Eudynamys scolopacea*) next to a house crow (*Corvus splendens*). The young bird which had the colouration of the female was seen pecking at its foster-parent, obviously demanding food. When the crow's mate returned with a beakful, the young koel was fed. The young koel was almost as big as the full grown koels and was also capable of flying. An adult (male) koel was noticed in the near vicinity, probably keeping an eye on its young one! I have had occasion of seeking koels being fed by crows in the campus of the Theosophical Society on 8th and 14th October and I remember seeing an adult (male) koel in the near vicinity. Are the koels in the habit of keeping an eye on

its young one, though under the official care of the crows? I have not sighted any young crows during these occasions.

Bulbuls Attacking Owlet: On November 18th at about 11.00 a.m., in a grove outside the city, I watched a spotted owlet (*Athene brama*) flying to a plam tree and settle on a branch. A couple of redvented bulbuls (*pycnonotus cafer*) which were already occupying the tree seemed to raise an objection at the presence of the raptor. They immediately broke into a chatter "teh-teh-teh" etc. and approached the owlet. One of them ventured within a few inches of the new comer and made threats with its chatter. The unwelcome visitor took to its wing and settled on a nearby tree. Yet the couple were not satisfied and chased it from that place also.

Territorial Rivalry Among Tailor Birds: On September 20th, 23rd and also many times later, I was able to hear and witness the 'duet songs' and other acts connected with the possession of a territory between two rival tailor birds (*Orthotomus sutorius*) in my garden. Usually, the females were also present. The act started with the singing of the males, witnessed by the females from a distance.

The males were even seen singing within a few inches of each other. At such times, the whole place would be filled by their "towit -tuit" etc. They would sing continuously for about a minute or so, sometimes hopping from branch to branch. Finally one would emerge victor and thereby the owner of the territory. The other male would fly to his own territory, acknowledging his defeat with his consort and sing. Once the victor was seen chasing his rival and his (rival's) mate from the territory. But there was was not any physical assault.

Reaction of Wagtails on seeing a Shikra: I noticed a pair of red-winged bushlarks (*Mirafra erythroptera*) on 3rd October at the estuary. One of them, (probably the male) cocked up its tail, drooped his wings, as in the case of the male sparrow and followed the female with 'mousy squeaks'. The female totally ignored him. Twice or thrice they met face to face and opened and closed their wings as though preparing for a combat. Then the female flew and settled a few yards away and the male did the usual parachuting act. Meanwhile, more males (?) approached the female and sang. Probably the former male was not selected by the female lark and other males tried their luck.

Crows Feeding on Newspapers: On 25th November, at about 4.40 p.m., a house crow alighted on the gate with a piece of newspaper. It transferred the same to its foot, holding it by the claws. Then, to my astonishment, it tore a piece and chewed it with relish and swallowed it! It ate about seven bits of the paper, letting a piece fall on the ground. When it flew after finishing the snack, I picked it up and found it to be wet (it had rained that morning).

I did not find anything edible on the piece of newspaper, after dipping it in the water and to my surprise, it was promptly accepted though the crow ate only two or three pieces. I repeated the test on 28th and a Jungle Crow tore and fed on three bits. I do not think the crows ate the paper for its water content for there was plenty of rain water in puddles nearby.

Courage of the Swallow-Shrikes: On December 21st, I happened to notice a pair of ashy swallow-shrikes (*Artamus fuscus*) engaged in a battle with the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) at the estuary. The smaller birds made a lot of noise 'chek chek' as they attacked the raptor undauntedly which was much larger than themselves. I was surprised about the swallow-shrikes attacking the kestrel. It was not in defence of their young ones as their breeding season was long over. In their breeding season, I have noticed them chasing intruders like the crows, very fiercely. On 22nd December, I noticed a drongo (*Dicrurus adsimilis*), well known for its pugnacity, attacking the kestrel for no apparent reason, single handed. Probably the swallow-shrikes, too, have a pugnacious tendency.

Arrival of Blyth's Reed Warbler in Madras: This time, the Blyth's reed warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) arrived earlier to Madras than on previous occasions. I heard it at 2.15 p.m. on the 29th of October, near my house. For the next ten days or so, though the bird was here, it was not heard regularly. But now it is very commonly heard and the calls unlike the ones on the first few days are louder and regular. Probably the bird was busy nourishing itself and regaining its health after its migration. Last year (1977) it had arrived in Madras on 16th November, according to my notes.

Bee-eaters drinking water and bathing: I have seen the common swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) drinking water from pools, puddles etc. They would dive towards the water, drink from the surface, rise and again dive. But I was surprised about a small green bee-eater (*Merops orientalis*) doing the same. I observed a bee-eater on the afternoon of 15th October (around 4.00 p.m.) at one of the pools of the open field on the banks of the Adyar river. Like the swallow, it dived, drank water and rose. It repeated the act twice or thrice. I do not think it could have dived at an insect as it did not seem to eat anything after emerging out and also it dived in various parts and did not dive again at a particular spot, in case it missed. I have also noted a black drongo imitate the swallow on 9th November at the same spot and time. But it dived only once.

On 12th November again at the same spot, at about 4.30 p.m. I saw a bee-eater plunging into the water. It dipped the whole beak and also its forehead. After this, it retreated to a nearby bush and proceeded to shake its head to the right and the left, as to get the water on its back for some seconds. Again it dived two more



times and repeated the same act. It also preened and oiled its feathers. More bee-eaters were seen on a nearby bush, also preening and oiling.

A Roosting Tailor Bird: On 23rd October, I noticed at about 5.45 p.m. a tailor bird in my backyard. It eyed me with caution from the drumstick tree for a while, as it hopped and then flew to the nearby pappaya tree. It chose the tip of a branch, just below the huge leaf, which could shelter it in case of rain, and prepared to roost after preening. From that day onwards, I see it regularly roosting on the tree. Of course, it changes the branch when it becomes old. It comes around 5.40 p.m., though sometimes at about 5.30 p.m. On a cloudy and rainy day, though it seemed to be quite dark even by 4.30 p.m. the bird turned up, as usual, only at 5.30 p.m. How is it that the bird was able to sense the time, even on such a day? It leaves by 6.00 a.m. in the mornings.

While roosting I have shone a torch many times on the bird at a height of about 6-7 feet. Yet the bird was not disturbed. Even unusual noises do not seem to disturb the bird. Once however, when a tailor bird was incubating a clutch of 3 eggs in the garden, I approached it at night with a lighted candle. The bird immediately flew out of the nest.

Birds and Heat: On many occasions, I have seen many common birds such as hoopoes, spotted doves, bee-eaters, white-breasted kingfishers, bulbuls, etc. perched on the television aerials near my house during afternoons, even during the summer. The television antenna made of metal are heated by the sun due to the direct exposure. But the birds do not seem to mind the heat. How is it that these birds are so unaffected by the heat.

Birdwatching At Pookote by C. Mohankumar, P.S. Sivaprasad, and L. Namassivayam.

Having heard of about a large fresh-water lake in the Wynaad hills, we decided to spend one week-end at Pookot chira. This lake is just on the brink of the steep ghats - near Lakkidi, 60 k.m. from Calicut on the Calicut-Mysore Road. It is about 2500 feet above mean sea level, surrounded by a belt of evergreen forest, and small hillocks. There is a well-maintained road running around the lake.

The state bus from Calicut dropped us at Lakkidi just over the ghats at 7.30 a.m. on 19.2.1978. It took us almost 45 minutes to cover the 12 k.m. of ghat road, which in its upper reaches runs through occasional patches of dense evergreen forests.

The first bird to greet us was a male grey jungle fowl (*Gallus sonneratii*) which flew across the road alarmed by the approaching bus. Lots of redwhiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) could be seen in every bush and tree and the whole place was resounding with their merry notes. Yellow-browed bulbuls (*Hypsipetes undicus*) were seen in appreciable numbers on nearing the lake. Another bird equally abundant was bourdillon's black-headed babbler (*Rhopocichla atriceps*). The undergrowths on both sides of the road were teeming with them. We sat down for breakfast near a dense canebrake bordering the lake. Listening to the medley of bird-notes around us, we sat absolutely still and were rewarded by a number of species of birds. The first to come were a small flock of travancore scimitar babblers (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*), followed by an odd blue-headed rock-thrush (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*). A large flock of nilgiri quaker babblers (*Alcippe poioicephala*) come next and they came to stay. The canopy of the trees was teeming with scores of white-eyes (*Zosterops palpebrosa*). Sharing the canopy were the small sunbirds (*Nectarinia minima*), brown flycatchers (*Muscicapa laterostris*), verditer flycatcher (*Muscicapa thalassina*) and lorikeets (*Loriculus vernalis*).

After one hour we proceeded around the lake. Mysterious noises inside a bush made us freeze and peering into the dense undergrowth we spotted a pair of blue chats (*Erithacus brunneus*), who quite ignorant of our presence came closer and closer until they were two or three feet away from us. The whole show was spoiled by a pitta (*Pitta brachyura*) which sensed our presence somehow and flew off creating an alarm. Then came a troupe of bonnet macaques (*Mecaca radiata*) with females and young jumping from tree to tree taking their own time to feed. We followed them on to a fig in fruit, where they rushed a small flock of malabar grey hornbill (*Tockus birostris*), who were quietly preening in the shade. They flew away with loud racous protestations against this outrageous attack on them. We withdrew our eyes from the retreating hornbills with a start, when a pair of crested serpent eagles (*Spilornis cheela*) burst out of the foliage above us and sailed over the lake. We proceeded forwards and before coming back to the canebrakes, we spotted scarlet minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*), common indian wood (*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*), yellow-cheeked tit (*Parus xanthogenys*), heartspotted woodpecker (*Hemicircus canente*), nilgiri flowerpecker (*Dicaeum concolor*), gold-fronted chloropsis (*Chloropsis aurifrons*), paradise flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*), greyheaded bulbuls (*Pycnonotus priocephalus*), small blue kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and pied kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*). Surprisingly enough the only water-bird we saw near the lake was an odd white breasted waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*). Turning away from the lake, we observed a velvet fronted nuthatch (*Sitta frontalis*) poking its head into a hole on a tree. Soon we noted that this particular tree was half dead, the upper portions were full of small holes and most of these were occupied by coppersmith barbet (*Megalaima haemacephala*).

By 2 O' clock we had a couple of sandwiches, and after a brief rest, started our long trek to Adivaram, which lies at the bottom of the

ghats, 15 k.m. away. As shadows began to lengthen, grey wagtails came upon the ghat road. At the edge of the cliff we spent a moment to enjoy the magnificent scenery below us shrouded in the evening gaze. Then we noted a huge nest of cremastogaster ant on a tree hanging over the cliff. A hole on the nest prompted us to throw a stone at it; and as we had expected, out flew a rufous woodpecker (*Micropternus brachyurus*).

One striking thing we noticed was the presence of certain birds which were completely absent around the lake, just a few feet above. These included the hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*), ruby throated bulbuls (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*), fairy bluebirds (*Irena puella*) and malabar whistling thrush (*Myiophonus horsfieldii*). Still down we were held spell bound by the brown-throated spinetailed swift (*Chaetura gigantea*) as they whizzed past us over the dense ravines and sheets of rocks. They were also accompanied by edible nest swiftlets (*Collorcalia unicolor*) and palm swifts (*Cypsiurus parvus*). The plaintive moaning notes of the southern green pigeon (*Treron phoenicoptera*) attracted our attention, and soon we spotted them on a huge fig feeding in the company of, malabar grey hornbills, and some other green pigeons.

Before reaching adivaram we ran into the blue-headed rockthrush five more times, and also spotted coorg wren warbler (*Prinia hodgsonii*), chestnut headed bee-eater (*Merops leschenaulti*), redvented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) -- quite absent at the top!, golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*) and racket tailed drongos (*Dicrurus paradiseus*). As the sun began to go down behind the western foothills, we stopped a while to rest our wearied legs. Looking back we had a breath-taking view of the craggy cliffs, golden in the evening sun, rising up from the gathering mist like fairy castles. Slowly it grew dark. By 7 p.m. we reached adivaram.

A list of other birds observed on the ghats and around the lake is given below: Blackwinged kite, shikra, bluerock pigeon, spotted dove, roseringed parakeet, blossomheaded parakeet, bluewinged parakeet, Indian koel, common hawk-cuckoo, alpine swift, whitebreasted kingfisher, small green bee-eater, Indian roller, small green barbet, Malabar golden-backed woodpecker, brown shrike, blackheaded oriole, black drongo, ashy drongo, bronze drongo, common myna, jungle myna, greyheaded myna, house crow, jungle crow, Indian treepie, iora, Jungle babbler, Greenish leaf warblers, pied wagtail, Tickell's flowerpecker, thick-billed flowerpecker, purple sunbird, purplerumped sunbird, house sparrow, yellowthroated sparrow, whitebacked munia, crowpheasant, tailor bird, magpie robin.

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CorrespondenceBirding in Almora by Jasper Newsome

I have not yet done a lot of birding here, but have daily views of Bearded Vultures, sometimes from only a few meters distance so one can see the 'beard' drooping on either side of the beak. I should like to study this bird in depth. It was one of Meinartzhagen's favourites and I shall always remember the magnificent tapestry in his drawing room of this bird, which he had woven himself. In his diaries there is a poignant entry of August 1914 which is an almost mystical contemplation on this bird and the fate of humanity.

The Titar (?) (Hill Partridge) are in full screech and the cuckoos omnipresent just now. I have no binoculars or books so there is much to discover. Luckily many birds are so familiar that a mere glance is enough - or the call, but some I see daily I know not what they are - for example, the tree creepers: I am not sure exactly which species they are.

My comment on Lavkumar's comment for inclusion in next Newsletter is:- My only explanation for omitting to mention the Dhayal (Magpie Robin), in what must to some readers have seemed an almost tedious list of the birds of Kathmandu, is the common one of overlooking the most obvious. This delightful bird is one of the most noticeable garden and village birds in Kathmandu. In spring their loud and memorable song begins well before the dawn when even the crows are still asleep.

The range of the Blackwinged Kite by M.B. Krishna

The Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan says that this bird is present up to C.1200 meters in the Peninsular hills. On the 4th of June 1979 I had been to Dodabetta, Nilgiris and at about 9.30 a.m., I saw this kite hovering about 17.25 meters above the ground. Dodabetta is about 2670 meters above sea level. So, could this probably be a height record for this bird? I would very much like to know if any of the readers have made similar observations.

Male Chauvinism? by Indra Kumar Sharma

In the February issue of the Newsletter Lavkumar Khacher refers to my male chauvinism regarding my comments on the Scarlet Minivet (Newsletter Nov.78). I have been doing research on ecological and ethological aspects of birds, mammals and other vertebrates in the Indian desert for the last 15 years. It is difficult to distinguish males and females among birds and other animals unless these have sexual dimorphism. The Peafowl exhibits distinct sexual dimorphism. I observed that in the Peafowl where the Peahens had less than 0.7 km radius home range in semi arid biotopes, the peacocks and a home-range of more than 1.5 km. The Peacock exerts himself a great deal while dancing whereas the Peahens are largely passive. It is also



the robust male which defeats other males which becomes the master of the harem. Undoubtedly therefore in several species of birds the male leads a more vigorous life than the female.

#### Finn's Baya Breeding at Meerut by Yado Mohan Rai

On 17th June 79 I discovered Finn's Baya's (*Ploceus megarhynchus*) building their typical rounded nests atop a Sheesham tree (*Dalbergia sissoo*) at the edge of vast marshland, some 35 kms from here. There are about 28 nests in various stages of development. It is pleasure to see the birds with yellow head, under parts, rump and brown ear coverts engaged in beautiful display with dark wings fluttering. The discovery of breeding Finn's Baya here may well mean the extension of their status and distribution upto Meerut (vide ref. Salim Ali and Dillon Replax: Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan Vol.X)

#### Crows in Kodaikanal by C.K. Ananthasubramaniam

This is with reference to my letter regarding "Crows in Kodaikanal" in Newsletter for October 1978. The appearance of a few domestic crows in Kodaikanal in recent years, where there were none all these years, has to be explained scientifically. Surely, the climate is not the cause for the absence of crows, since there are plenty of crows in Coonoor and Ootacamund on the Nilgiris, both hill stations above 6000 ft. We will return to this point later. It is suggested that the recent construction of a new ghat road from Palni the famous pilgrim centre to Kodaikanal may have some connection with the appearance of the crow in Kodaikanal. The crows might have followed the labour camp constructing the new ghat road, since the labourers nowadays carry plenty of food with them. A few of the crows must have ventured to greater heights and eventually into Kodaikanal itself. Secondly the access from Palni to Kodaikanal is direct, and hence the crows can commute from Palni to Kodaikanal and back within a short time, once the place is discovered.

Mr. J.S. Serrao of the Bombay Natural History Society points out that there are no crows in Mahabaleshwar (4500 ft), as well as, in the human settlements at 2000 ft on the way. He also says that the crow does not permanently reside at Matheran (2500 ft) near Bombay, but daily commutes to and from the hill station in the morning and evening respectively, but it does not inhabit the Dungan village on the way.

We do not know when the crow first migrated to the Nilgiris. But, right from the foot of the ghats at Mettupalayam upto Ootacamund, we have ten inhabited settlements at gradually ascending heights on the rail-road, and these must have induced the crow to venture upto Ootacamund, in the beginning.



We should have data first about the absence or presence of crows at other hill stations in India before we base our conclusions on this interesting problem.

#### Our Contributors

Mr. C.K. Ananthasubramaniam, 2, Chinnappa Gounder St., Coimbatore, Pin 641 038.  
 Mr. M.B. Krishna, 10 Ranga Rao Road, Shankarpuram, Bangalore 560 004.  
 Mr. Indra Kumar Sharma, Bhagawati Bhavan, Ratanada Road, Jodhpur - 342020.  
 Mr. Yado Mohan Rai, 414, W. Kutcheri Road, Meerut 250 052.  
 Mr. Jasper Newsome, c/o. Post Master, Almora, U.P.  
 Mr. C. Mohankumar, Inspector, Special Customs Preventive Unit, Kozhikode 670 001.  
 Mr. P.S. Sivaprasad, 18/399, G.H. School Road, Chalapuram, Kozhikode-673002.  
 Mr. L. Namassivayam, 13/111, Kammath Lane, Kozhikode 673002.  
 Mr. Appa Row, Vice Chancellor, Andhra University, Waltair, Vishakapatnam.  
 Mr. K.S.R. Krishna Raju, Managing Director, Saileru Food Products(P) Ltd., Vishakapatnam 3.  
 Mr. V. Santharam, 10, Leith Castle South Street, Santhome, Madras-600 028.

#### Subscriptions for 1979 have been received from: KARNATAKA

Shri. S.G. Neginhal, M.A., Asstt. Conservator of Forests, Sub Division, Mundgod, Karnataka 581349, Rs. 15/-; Mr. K.B. Sadananda, 11, Temple Road, Jayalakshmipuram, Mysore 570 012, Rs.15/-.  
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**Editor : Zafar Futehally,**  
Dodda Gubbi Post, Via Vidyanagar, Bangalore-562 134  
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*Cover Picture:* Redwattled Lapwing, Photo by E. Hanumantha Rao